

Senator Esser's 2005 Survey Results

Introduction

Percentages are based on the total number of answers counted for that question. Rating matrixes have the responses sorted by their average¹ response values.

Percentage of Surveys Returned

14,507 surveys mailed, with 674 returned, yielding a 4.65% return

Survey Results

BUDGET AND TAXES

1. Which of the following issues do you think are most important for the Legislature to address during the 2005 session? (Please rank according to importance to you, with "1" being the most important, "2" being the next important, and so on.)

| Issue Priorities | Average |
|---|---------|
| f. Higher education (colleges & universities) | 3.88 |
| a. Crime and drugs | 3.96 |
| d. Election reform | 4.39 |
| e. Health care | 4.83 |
| h. Transportation | 5.25 |
| b. Economy and jobs | 5.42 |
| c. Education (public schools) | 5.49 |
| g. Taxes and spending | 5.57 |

2. Based on current forecasts, the state is looking at roughly a \$2 billion shortfall in the 2005-07 operating budget. This projection assumes the state continues all current services, conducts business in the same way, refuses to contract out any services, provides pay raises negotiated for state employees and funds spending on state initiatives that did not include funding sources. How would you suggest we approach this budget shortfall?

| Budget Solutions | Voter 1 | | Voter 2 | |
|---|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| | Count | % | Count | % |
| a. The budget gap is so large that a tax increase must be part of the solution | 109 | 10.95% | 54 | 5.43% |
| b. Prioritize spending, maximize efficiencies and then consider a tax increase as a last resort | 325 | 32.66% | 160 | 16.08% |
| c. Don't raise taxes, under any circumstances | 214 | 21.51% | 133 | 13.37% |
| Totals: | 648 | 65.13% | 347 | 34.87% |

¹ Average computed by counting the responses for each value, multiplying the count by the inverse value (If the value being counted is 1, then the inverse is 8; if the value is 2, then the inverse is 7; etc.), summing the inverse sums for Voter 1 & Voter 2, then dividing by the total response count.

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3. If you do favor raising taxes to help balance the state operating budget, which taxes would you raise? (Choose all taxes that you favor raising.)

| Raise Which Taxes? | Voter 1 | | Voter 2 | |
|----------------------------------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| | Count | % | Count | % |
| a. Business gross receipts taxes | 76 | 5.41% | 29 | 2.06% |
| b. Death tax (Estate tax) | 98 | 6.98% | 48 | 3.42% |
| c. Income taxes | 126 | 8.97% | 54 | 3.84% |
| d. Property taxes | 49 | 3.49% | 24 | 1.71% |
| e. Sales taxes | 97 | 6.90% | 43 | 3.06% |
| f. Tax on beer, wine and spirits | 308 | 21.92% | 154 | 10.96% |
| g. Tax on health care services | 10 | 0.71% | 2 | 0.14% |
| h. None | 182 | 12.95% | 105 | 7.47% |
| Totals: | 946 | 67.33% | 459 | 32.67% |

4. In 2003, the Legislature used the Priorities of Government (POG) approach to address a \$2.8 billion shortfall without raising taxes. The POG process ranked programs and services based on importance. This resulted in a state budget that lived within the state's means and delivered services based on priorities without using a tax increase. Should the Legislature continue to use the POG approach in crafting the 2005-07 budget and future budgets?

| Priorities of Government | Voter 1 | | Voter 2 | |
|--------------------------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| | Count | % | Count | % |
| a. Yes | 524 | 56.28% | 260 | 27.93% |
| b. No | 92 | 9.88% | 55 | 5.91% |
| Totals: | 616 | 66.17% | 315 | 33.83% |

ELECTIONS

5. The governor's race in 2004 brought a lot of attention to our election process. Do you believe our election process counts every vote and that only legitimate voters vote?

| Fair Elections | Voter 1 | | Voter 2 | |
|----------------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| | Count | % | Count | % |
| a. Yes | 112 | 12.16% | 44 | 4.78% |
| b. No | 493 | 53.53% | 272 | 29.53% |
| Totals: | 605 | 65.69% | 316 | 34.31% |

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EDUCATION

6. Because they involve property taxes, school levies currently require a 60 percent “supermajority” vote to be approved. Do you favor changing the state constitution so school levies that involve property taxes can pass with a simple majority (at least 50 percent) instead of the “supermajority” requirement?

| Levy Simple Majority | Voter 1 | | Voter 2 | |
|--|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| | Count | % | Count | % |
| a. Yes | 178 | 18.02% | 87 | 8.81% |
| b. Yes, but only if the levy election is held in November when voter turnout is greatest | 160 | 16.19% | 82 | 8.30% |
| c. No | 308 | 31.17% | 173 | 17.51% |
| Totals: | 646 | 65.38% | 342 | 34.62% |

7. Because of the high cost of living in the greater Seattle area, many school districts say they have a hard time recruiting and retaining teachers. Do you favor having teachers receive an extra housing allowance if they live in areas where housing costs are higher than average?

| Teacher Housing COLA | Voter 1 | | Voter 2 | |
|----------------------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| | Count | % | Count | % |
| a. Yes | 374 | 38.96% | 186 | 19.38% |
| b. No | 258 | 26.88% | 142 | 14.79% |
| Totals: | 632 | 65.83% | 328 | 34.17% |

8. Do you agree or disagree with the statement, “Students need to meet challenging graduation standards more than ever before because of challenges in the workplace and in higher education”?

| Graduation Standards | Voter 1 | | Voter 2 | |
|----------------------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| | Count | % | Count | % |
| a. Agree | 553 | 57.37% | 282 | 29.25% |
| b. Disagree | 82 | 8.51% | 47 | 4.88% |
| Totals: | 635 | 65.87% | 329 | 34.13% |

9. What is your view on how much students learn in school?

| Student Learning | Voter 1 | | Voter 2 | |
|--|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| | Count | % | Count | % |
| a. Students are expected to learn too much in school | 16 | 1.74% | 4 | 0.44% |
| b. Students are learning the right amount in school | 124 | 13.51% | 57 | 6.21% |
| c. Students aren't learning enough | 460 | 50.11% | 257 | 28.00% |
| Totals: | 600 | 65.36% | 318 | 34.64% |

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10. The cost of tuition at the UW and WSU is far below those of peer universities in other states. Administrators are requesting tuition increases to help meet the rapidly increasing costs of providing a quality college education. Which of the following best matches your opinion on this issue?

| UW & WSU Tuition | Voter 1 | | Voter 2 | |
|--|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| | Count | % | Count | % |
| a. Students should pay tuition at a level that reflects the cost of providing their education | 195 | 20.42% | 98 | 10.26% |
| b. Tuition at the UW and WSU should correlate to that of peer universities, but additional student financial aid should also be provided | 315 | 32.98% | 168 | 17.59% |
| c. Raising tuition rates is too much of a burden on students and their parents | 120 | 12.57% | 59 | 6.18% |
| Totals: | 630 | 65.97% | 325 | 34.03% |

TRANSPORTATION

11. The Department of Transportation is conducting a pilot project allowing the HOV lanes on I-90 (east of Island Crest Way on Mercer Island), I-405, State Route 167 and State Route 520 (east of Bellevue Way) to be open to all vehicles every day between 7 p.m. and 5 a.m. What is your view on opening the HOV lanes to all vehicles?

| I-90 HOV Lanes | Voter 1 | | Voter 2 | |
|--|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| | Count | % | Count | % |
| a. HOV lanes involved in the pilot project should be permanently open to all vehicles at these times | 89 | 9.31% | 49 | 5.13% |
| b. All HOV lanes in the Puget Sound region, including those on I-5, should be open to all vehicles between 7 p.m. and 5 a.m. | 368 | 38.49% | 191 | 19.98% |
| c. All HOV lanes should be restricted at all hours to only buses, vanpools and vehicles with at least two occupants | 173 | 18.10% | 86 | 9.00% |
| Totals: | 630 | 65.90% | 326 | 34.10% |

12. A 2002 state law, the Regional Transportation Investment District law or "RTID," authorized a ballot measure to fund local highway projects, including expanding I-405 and replacing the Evergreen Point Floating Bridge. Should this law remain focused on highway improvement and replacement projects or should it be expanded to help fund Sound Transit light rail in Seattle?

| RTID Expansion | Voter 1 | | Voter 2 | |
|--|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| | Count | % | Count | % |
| a. Leave the RTID law alone | 465 | 47.84% | 250 | 25.72% |
| b. Open up the RTID law to fund light rail | 173 | 17.80% | 84 | 8.64% |
| Totals: | 638 | 65.64% | 334 | 34.36% |

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HEALTH CARE

13. What should be the government's role in health care?

| Government Role in Health Care | Voter 1 | | Voter 2 | |
|---|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| | Count | % | Count | % |
| a. Government should provide health care to all citizens, regardless of income | 134 | 14.87% | 64 | 7.10% |
| b. Government should make it easier for businesses to provide health care for their employees | 175 | 19.42% | 103 | 11.43% |
| c. Government's role is to provide health care only for those in poverty who cannot afford their own coverage | 190 | 21.09% | 102 | 11.32% |
| d. Government has no role to play in health care | 82 | 9.10% | 51 | 5.66% |
| Totals: | 581 | 64.48% | 320 | 35.52% |

| Receive a Copy of Survey Results? | Count | % |
|--|-------|-----|
| If you would like to receive a copy of the results of this survey, please mark this box: | 387 | 57% |